The Doctrine of Merger

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HARIJAN

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WHO SHOULD BE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS?

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

The following is a free translation of Principal Sreeman Narain Aggarwal's letter in Hindustani from Wardha:

"In the Constitution that is being framed by the Constituent Assembly, there is to be provision for the election of provincial governors by the majority of voters under the adult franchise system. From this one is entitled to infer that as a rule, the nominees of the Congress Parliamentary Board will be elected. The Chief Miniter of the province will also be of the Congress party. Commonsense dictates that the provincial Governor must be above the party politics of the province concerned, or above being unduly influenced by the Chief Minister or above friction between himself and his Chief Minister.

"In my opinion there is no necessity for a Governor. The Chief Minister should be able to take his place and people's money to the tune of Rs. 5,500 per month for the sinecure of the Governor will be saved. Nevertheless, no provincial Governor should belong to his own province.

"Moreover, in this way the expense and worry of an election by the majority of the adult population will be saved. Will it not be proper and better for the President of the Union to select Governors satisfying the reasonable test above suggested? Such Governors will surely raise the tone of the public life of the provinces governed by them. It is worthy of note that the present Governors have been appointed by the Central Cabinet of the Union on the above basis and, therefore, their influence on their provinces has been wholesome. I fear that if the Governors are elected as threatened under the forthcoming Constitution, their influence is likely to be unwholesome.

"Further, the Constitution as foreshadowed makes no mention of the village *panchayats* being the foundation of the progressive decentralization in the place of the old hunger for centralization. There are other such defects which one can profitably point out, but I have no right or desire to enter into an elaborate criticism of our seasoned leaders. I have but ventured to draw your attention to the defects which have appeared to me and demand your guidance."

There is much to be said in favour of the argument advanced by Principal Aggarwal about the appointment of provincial Governors. I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. I do not know the context in which the proposal under discussion has been made. But, examined in isolation, the criticism appears irresistable, with the exception that much as I would like to spare every pice of the public treasury, it would be bad economy to do away with provincial Governors and regard Chief Ministers as a perfect equivalent. Whilst I would resent much power of interference to be given to Governors, I do not think that they should be mere figure-heads. They should have enough power enabling them to influence ministerial policy for the better. In their detached position they would be able to see things in their proper perspective and thus prevent mistakes by their Cabinets. Theirs must be an all-pervasive moral influence in their provinces.

Principal Aggarwal says that there is no mention or direction about village *panchayats* and decentralization in the foreshadowed Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention if our independence is to reflect the people's voice. The greater the power of the *panchayats*, the better for the people. Moreover, *panchayats* to be effective and efficient, the level of people's education has to be considerably raised. I do not conceive the increase in the power of the people in military, but in moral terms. Naturally, I swear by *Naee Talim* in this connection.

New Delhi, 11-12-'47

Never Dangerous

When it is relevant, truth has to be uttered, however unpleasant it may be. Irrelevance is always untruth and should never be uttered. Misdeeds of the Hindus in the Union have to be proclaimed by the Hindus from the housetop, if those of the Muslims in Pakistan are to be arrested or stopped. Confession of one's guilt purifies and uplifts. Its suppression is degrading and should always be avoided.

New Delhi, 13-12-'47 M. K. G.

'INTELLECTUAL' CONTENT OF THE 'TAKLI'

An Education officer of the Government of India writes in reference to my last article in the *Harijan* entitled *Work as Education*:

> "What I am anxious to know is how the boys in question learnt their geography, history, languages, mathematics, etc. through carding, spinning and weaving."

This is by no means only the officer's difficulty. Every time a visitor, whether he be an educationist or a layman comes to our institution, this is the first and very often the only question he inveriably asks.

The question seems to betray bookish pre-occupation. Do they regard the imparting of knowledge of these subjects as the alpha and omega of education? Hardly anybody seems even to suspect that craft may be teaching something much more important than these subjects. The aim of education is not to stuff the student with the knowledge of the 'respectable' subjects but to stimulate his various faculties and enable him to seek the path of right living. In this process knowledge comes as an aid. But it is only an aid, never the end. Even then, it is not the amount of knowledge that matters, it is its quality, the way in which it is imparted. The right method of imparting knowledge, I have already dealt with in an article entitled *Methodology of Nayee Talim*, published in the January, 1947 issue of *Educational India*.

The above question also implies scepticism about the potentialities of correlation in craft work, so long the pre-occupation solely of the lowest and the most uneducated classes. A doubt naturally arises in the mind: How can such things be the means of the highest education? This doubt, I hope, will disappear after the following account of the subjects that can be taught through the *takli*, which is one of the simplest instruments: consisting only of an iron rod and a brass disc. I will take subject by subject, and show how through this insignificant little thing we can enter the "Penetralium of the Mystery" in each case.

LANGUAGE

I shall first deal with language. Language consists of words and sentences which denote things and actions. They obviously are involved in any process. The advantage of learning them in connection with craft work or any other work that is actually done is that having a basis in the child's concrete experience they get more firmly fixed in the child's mind.

ARITHMETIC AND GEOMETRY

Arithmetic and Geometry come next. Numbers and the Four Simple Rules automatically come in when there are a number of *taklis* distributed among a number of children. In connection with the problem as to what should be the shape of the cardboard piece on which the *takli* revolves, and as to why the *takli* should revolve in the centre of that piece, we can teach: What is an angle? What are acute, obtuse and right angles? The definitions of point, line, perpendicular and diagonals come in. We can learn how to find the area of a rectangle, the area of a right-angled, an obtuse-angled and an acute-angled triangle, and other allied problems. In connection with the construction and nature of the iron rod we can learn definitions of point, line, axis, cylinder, cross-section, circle, centre, circumference and radius, and also how to find the area and circumference of a circle and volume of a cylinder. Thought on the circular nature of the disc and the rod brings us to the definition of curve, sector and tangent, and to the method of finding the area and circumference of a circle involving fractions. The study of the box in which the *takli* is kept leads us to the study of the method of finding the volume of a cuboid, the solid matter in a hollow cuboid, etc. The question of the shape of the cone of yarn leads us to study as to how to find the area of the curved surface of a cone and its volume.

PHYSICS

Let us now take physics — a sufficiently frightening name to simple village folk. The fact that the *takli* is a small machine leads us to the definitions of 'Machine' and 'Mechanics'. How does a *takli* revolve? This question leads us to study Newton's First Law of Motion, definitions of Matter and Force, the three factors involved in Force, representation of Force, Speed and Velocity, Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces, Motion — linear and circular, the measurements of these two forms of Motion, and the Moment of a Couple. Why does a *takli* stop? In answering this we come across Newton's Law of Gravitation, Parallel Forces and their Resultant, Axis; Action and Reaction of the surface of the earth — Newton's Third Law of Motion; Acceleration and Retardation (in connection with changing speed) and their representation; Momentum and change of Momentum — Newton's Second Law of Motion: and Elasticity (in connection with the tendency of the fibres to unwind themselves).

Again the search for the reason as to why the *takli* does not fall down while revolving leads us to the realm of Equilibrium — stable and unstable, and the Centre of Gravity. The reason for the circular nature of the disc and the cylindrical nature of the rod leads us to study Friction and Newton's Second Law of Motion. The answer as to why the disc is heavy brings in Momentum and Newton's Third Law of Motion. Elasticity comes in when we ask ourselves why the rod is of iron while the piece on which the *takli* revolves is made of cardboard. Study of the relation of the weight and volume of the rod, of the brass disc, and of the *takli* as a whole leads us to definitions of Mass, Weight, Density and Specific Gravity; and to the method of finding out Specific Gravity and the Principle of Archimedes.

CHEMISTRY

Nor is Chemistry too sacrosanct for the depredations of the little *takli*. The rod is made of iron. The disc is made of brass, an alloy of copper

with zinc. Definitions of elements, mixtures and compounds, naturally come in. So do definitions of metals and non-metals and the properties of the three metals mentioned above. Why does the rod rust ? The question leads us to study Oxidation, Chemical and Physical changes, Elements and Compounds, Atoms and Molecules, and formulae of Compounds. What is the greenish thing formed on the brass disc ? This brings us to Hydrogen Sulphide and its action on copper. A rough idea of the manufacture of the metals mentioned above can, of course, be given in this connection.

GEOGRAPHY

The natural desire to know the places in the world, and especially in India, where the above metals are found, brings us to the realm of Geography. Again the query as to where the different types of the *takli* are or were found brings us to the geographical location of many places.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY AND SOCIOLOGY

Economics, History and Sociology also come in to help us in understanding the problems of this little but mighty instrument. The question naturally arises as to why we use the *takli* and other simple instruments when we can command the service of huge factories. Again, why do we prefer the *takli* even to the spinning wheel? These questions stimulate us to think over the extreme poverty of the country, the exploitation of the weaker nations by the imperialist countries, the incompatibility of universal democracy and individual freedom with the industrialization of the whole world, the economics of decentralization and self-sufficiency, and hence the necessity of cheap and simple methods of production. The *takli* is to be preferred to the spinning wheel for it is simpler, cheaper and hence can reach the millions much more easily. Again the study of the materials used in the *takli* naturally leads one to find out the economic position of India regarding the metals used, the trade in these metals and its economics. The history of the *takli*, its changing forms, its survival in Bihar and other places, would by themselves form an interesting chapter. Again many lessons in practical sociology such as cleanliness, time-sense, co-operation etc. can be given through craft work as explained in my last article *Work as Education* referred to above.

PHYSIOLOGY

Even Physiology comes in when we study the various postures or *asans* taken up in plying the *takli*. In order to find out the most convenient *asan* we must study the form which the skeleton adopts in each *asan*. The different positions of the leg and the arm muscles will also come in, and along with it their structure and manner of movement. Again, spinning involves the co-ordination of various muscles, which brings us to nerve-control. Reflex action and its seat, the Spinal Cord, explain the common phenomenon of the automatic spinning after some practice. The problem as to how to look at the thread being drawn out without injuring the eye leads us to study the structure of the eye, refraction, effect of winking etc.

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology comes in when we study the effect on the mind of the rhythm and harmony involved in spinning, spinning as occupational therapy, and effects of the disturbance of the mind on the thread and vice versa. Training of the mind through the proper organization of craft work brings us to the realm of practical psychology. Again psychology of group spinning opens out other interesting fields for study.

The above by no means exhausts the richness of the magical thing called the *takli* which we have been accustomed to look down upon with contempt. It is, however, sufficient, to indicate that we can enter the realm of the 'highest' education through the medium of the craft of cloth production, especially if it is taken in its entirety from the production of raw cotton to the finished cloth.

New Delhi, 20-11-'47 DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

DEMOCRATIZE OUR RAILWAYS

Our railways are still a stern reminder of the bad old days when the common man contributed the largest share of their revenue and yet received the least possible attention at their hands. As Leonand Woolf informs us (*The Modern State* edited by Mary Adams, Allen and Unwin, p. 46), as late as 1900 the third-class passenger in England was badly off like his compeer in India. "The first-class passenger on the railway was given a very comfortable seat; the second-class passenger was given a fairly comfortable seat; the third-class passenger was given a kind of wooden cattle-truck with an intolerably uncomfortable seat." But then the democratic idea of equality was applied to railway travelling in England with a result, which is thus described by Mr. Woolf: "Today the second-class passenger has practically disappeared; he has been squeezed out of existence by democracy. And the third-class carriage is very nearly as comfortable as the first."

We do not know what are the present plans of our Minister in charge of Railways. But is it too much to hope that before the end of 1948 something perceptible will have been done to relieve the terrible overcrowding in third-class carriages by increasing the number of trains per day and the number of bogies attached per train? Whether this is possible or not we do not know. If it is not, will it be possible to educate the passengers to refrain from overcrowding and to observe the necessary rules of corporate cleanliness? V. G. D.

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Agents are requested to take note of the following :

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2. The amounts for the deposits are usually sent by the agents by cheques. Please note that we do not accept cheques. The amount should be remitted either by M. O., Postal Order or by a bank draft.

MANAGER

HARIJAN

December 21 1947

THE DOCTRINE OF MERGER

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Merger, as used here, has no legal significance. People of some States in the Deccan Union are reported to have expressed an intense desire for the extinction of their princely houses and their absorption in their provinces. This has been described as merging in British India (as it was called during British rule), as distinguished from Princely India or States.

In a society based on non-violence, there should be no impatient destruction compassed by man of another, for, every evil-doer, unless he mends his ways, is bound to destroy himself. Evil can never be self-existent. Therefore, the Congress policy has always been to mend princely rule, not to end it, and to induce the princes to become trustees and servants in reality of their people. In pursuance of that policy the Congress Government has tried and in the main succeeded in inducing the States to accede to the Union instead of planning the destruction of princely rule and absorption of their States as an integral part of the Union provinces concerned. Therefore, merger can take place only under two conditions, viz. if the misrule of a particular prince is self-evident and is irremediable, the people will have the right, as it will be their duty, to seek absorption or merger in their province. The second condition would be when a prince and the people of his State both desire merger. It is suggested that any one State or its people, whether powerful or insignificant, should not seek merger unless all the States or the majority desire it. I do not think so. Misrule cannot wait to be ended before there is equal misrule in other States. Nor can a prince, who does not wish for any princely power be expected or be made to wait till the other princes are ready. Each case will have to be decided on its merits by the Central Government.

New Delhi, 13-12-'47

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SPINNING STILL!

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

A correspondent writes:

"I and the members of my family have been regular spinners and wearers of *khadi*. Now that we have got our freedom, do you still contend that we should spin and wear *khadi*?"

This is a strange question. Nevertheless, it represents the condition of many people. Such persons evidently took to the spinning wheel and *khadi* merely mechanically and as one of the means of attaining freedom. These friends forget that freedom was not mere removal of the foreign yoke, though it was the first essential. *Khadi* represents and represented a way of life based on non-violence. Rightly or wrongly, it is my opinion that practical disappearance of *khadi* and non-violence shows that the main implication of *khadi* was not grasped by us during all these years. Hence, the tragedy we witness of fratricidal strife and the lawlessness on many sides. I have no doubt that spinning and weaving of *khadi* are more important than ever if we are to have freedom that is to be instinctively felt by the masses of the villagers of India. That is the Kingdom of God on earth. Through *khadi* we were struggling to establish the supremacy of man in the place of the supremacy of power-driven machine over him. Through *khadi* we were striving for equali y of all men and women in the place of the gross inequality to be witnessed today. We were striving to attain subservience of capital under labour in the place of the insolent triumph of capital over labour. Unless, therefore, all the effort made during the past thirty years in India was a retrograde step, hand-spinning and all it implies must be prosecuted with much greater vigour and far greater intelligence than hitherto.

New Delhi, 13-12-'47

QUESTION BOX

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Q. Why does Gandhiji resort to a fast when he faces extreme difficulties? What is the effect of this action on the life of the public of India?

A. Such a question has been put to me before but never, perhaps, precisely in the same terms. The answer, however, is easy. It is the last weapon in the armoury of the votary of *ahimsa*. When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the fasting is a spiritual act and, therefore, addressed to God. The effect of such action on the life of the people is that when the person fasting is at all known to them their sleeping conscience is awakened. But there is the danger that the people through mistaken sympathy may act against their will in order to save the life of the loved one. This danger has got to be faced. One ought not to be deterred from right action when one is sure of the rightness. It can but promote circumspection. Such a fast is undertaken in obedience to the dictates of the inner voice and, therefore, prevents haste.

New Delhi, 10-12-'47

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Birla House, New Delhi, 8-12-'47

A Muslim Society's Warning

A Muslim society warns me against accepting any statement whether from Muslim sources or non-Muslim ones and entering upon argument. The better course is to verify them and then act. The society further proceeds to advise me that I should go to Kathiawad and see things for myself. This, I have already said, I cannot do today. I must attend to my duty in Delhi and roundabout. These advisers forget, too, that by the friendly method I adopted I have a definite withdrawal to the extent necessary from the very parties who had complained. The moral is that where there is pursuit of truth for its own sake, the result is always happy as has been verified in innumerable cases. Patience and perseverance are essential in any such search.

Doleful Letter from Sind

Doleful letters continue to come from Sind. The latest from Karachi says that there are practically no murders, but there is no life of self-respect for the Hindus. Thus, Muslims from the Union enter your house whenever they like and calmly declare that they have come to occupy it. They have no authority. Yet, you dare not say no. Such instances are not rare. The Karachi of a few months ago has become a dream. This is the substance of a long letter which I hold to be trustworthy. This betokens anarchy. This kind of treatment is what may be called killing by inches and at the same time killing the soul also. I would plead with the Pakistan authorities to arrest this lawlessness. It is an unhealthy growth, the sooner removed the better.

Controls Again

Sugar control has gone and control on cereals, pulses and cloth will go. The object of the removal is not to lower the prices at a bound, it is to return to normal life. Superimposed control is bad any day. It is worse in this country in that we are a nation of millions spread over a large area 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. I need not take into account the division of the country. We are not a military nation and we grow or can grow our own foodstuffs and enough cotton for our requirements. When this control is removed, the nation will breathe free, it will have the right to make mistakes. This ancient method, of progressing by making mistakes and correcting them, is the proper way. Keep a child in cotton wools and stunt it or kill it. If you will let it develop into a robust man, you will expose his body to all weathers, teaching him how to defy them. Precisely in the same manner, a government worth the name has to show the nation how to face deficits, bad weathers and other handicaps of life through its own collective effort instead of its being effortlessly helped to live anyhow.

Meaning of Decontrol

Thus considered decontrol means that the business of foresight is transferred from the few members of the Government to the millions composing the nation. The Government will have new tasks to perform towards the nation so as to enable it to discharge the duty devolved upon it. Methods of transport have to be put in order, and those of growing more food have to be brought home to the people and to that end the agricultural department has to learn how to serve the small grower rather than the capitalist grower. The Government has on the one hand to trust all arms of the nation as well as to watch and check their movement, regard being had always to the interest hitherto neglected of the small grower, who represents the largest majority of the millions. He is the consumer of his own crops reserving a small percentage for the mere consumer who, in exchange for the food stuffs he gets, gives cash for buying the other necessaries of life. Control has meant less payment to the grower than he would otherwise command from the open market. Hence, to the extent that he gets a higher price, the prices of food must rise. These, the consumer will not grudge. The Government has to see that in the new set up the whole of the percentage in the rise of prices goes to the grower. This has to be made clear to the public from day to day or week to week as the case may be. The wealthy factory owners or middlemen have to work in co-operation with and in subordination to the Government. I understand that the process is going on. There should be perfect co-ordination among these few men or corporations who have hitherto exploited the poor for their selfish purpose and have not hesitated to enter into unhealthy rivalry among themselves. This has to go especially in the case of food and cloth where the profit motive is to be wholly absent. Any successful attempt at adding to their profit owing to decontrol will defeat its purpose. Let us hope that these monied interests will rise to the occasion.

Birla House, New Delhi, 9-12-'47

Their Change

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to a newspaper report saying that Sardar Patel and he were going to Pilani for change of air. Neither Sardar Patel nor he had any time for such a change. Their change consisted in getting rest at night. But he had no right to speak for the Sardar, who might seek a quiet place for giving himself cessation from interviews and office work. For himself, he had no cares of office and he had vowed to do or die in and about Delhi. He had heard too that elaborate preparations were being made in Delhi for sending all kinds of provisions for them. This was fantastically false. The report about Pilani, he saw in the papers. Why they did not verify the report from the Sardar or him, he did not know.

Worse than Murder

Gandhiji next referred to a Sindhi friend's letter. Some days back he had referred to the letter of a doctor from Sind describing the hardships of the Harijans in Sind. The letter said that the doctor had been put under arrest and that several other workers were also arrested, though not with the doctor. The idea, it was said, was not to let anyone, who could speak for the Harijans, be free in Sind. It was a terrible state of affairs. He warned the Pakistan Government that such treatment was bound to drive away all workers. It was worse than outright murder.

A Word to Kasturba Workers

Referring to his own talk to the women workers of the Kasturba Trust that afternoon, he said that the

Trust was meant for the service of women and children in the villages of India. The workers had been mostly drawn from the cities. The cities uptil now had exploited the villages. The right thing would be that the cities should be there to be exploited for the villages. But today the capitalists brought raw materials from the villages and used them to make money. If these *sevikas* wanted to serve the villages, they had to become villagers at heart. They had to cease to be city-minded. They should take to the villages the good things of the cities, as for instance cleanliness and sanitation, but even these had to be given a rural garb. Then alone they would be able to check the exploitation of the villages and improve the lot of women and children there.

Birla House, New Delhi, 10-12-'47

Implications of the Charkha

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji talked about the Charkha Sangh. He had gone to the Harijan Nivas to attend the meeting of the Charkha Sangh the day before and the Talimi Sangh that day. The Charkha Sangh stood for the propagation of the *charkha* and what it stood for, i. e. *ahimsa*. It taught and encouraged people to produce their own cloth. It taught all the processes beginning from the ginning, slivering and spinning of cotton to the preparation of cloth. If the people did that, they would be benefitted in two ways. They would save the money spent in buying cloth and they would utilize their time in an artistic handicraft. He had said already that to suffer from shortage of cloth in India was sheer madness. The Charkha Sangh had succeeded in distributing a few crores of rupees among the poor villagers against useful work, but it had not succeeded in making the message of the *charkha* popular among the seven lakhs villages of India. If all these villages had hummed with the *charkha*, the world and they would never have witnessed the tragic scenes that were happening. The villages would have been happy busy hives. But today people thought only in terms of the mills in which only a few could work. The interest of monied men came before those of the masses. He had no quarrel with the former. He was staying with one. But their ways and his ways were different. Everyone talked of serving the poor. The socialists talked of the rule of the masses. The socialist revolution and socialization of big industry might come in its time, but today even they should work for the *charkha* and all it implied. They should tell the people to become self-sufficient at least in clothing.

Charkha and Communal Harmony

Continuing Gandhiji said that he had been working to that end for more than thirty years. He had called the *charkha* the symbol of non-violence. If the message of the *charkha* had spread, there would be no talk of turning out the Muslims. Large numbers had left Delhi. There was talk about turning out the rest. Would the Hindus go and live in their mosques? That would be the ruin of Hinduism.

Live and Let Live

News had come from Ajmer that a large number of Muslims had been scared away. Out of the remaining, some had been killed and the poison was spreading to the villages. There was a big *Dargah* at Ajmer where the Hindus and the Muslims both offered worship. Had they gone mad now? Gandhiji wanted them all to pray for good sense to prevail. In their efforts to kill or turn out the Muslims, they would kill Hinduism. Similarly, the Muslims would kill Islam by wiping out the Hindus and the Sikhs from Pakistan. The only way to live was to let live.

Birla House, New Delhi, 11-12-'47

The Verse from the Quran

Before the prayers started a member of the audience stood up and requested Gandhiji to explain the meaning of the verse from the *Quran* that was recited in the prayers. Gandhiji did that in his post-prayer speech. In the verse the devotee called upon Allah, the All Merciful to save him from the clutches of the accursed Satan. He was the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Allah was one. He had no son and was not the son of anyone. In the end was the prayer that He might lead the devotee on the path trodden by those who were blessed with His grace.

They might ask him why the Muslims did the deeds that went contrary to the above teaching. He asked them in return: did the Christians live up to the message of the Bible or the Hindus up to the message of the *Upanishads*? All Muslims were not bad and all Hindus were not good.

Assurance of Muslim Peace Mission

Four Muslim friends of the U. P. had been to the West Punjab on a peace mission. They had come to see Gandhiji in the morning and told him that the Hindus could go and live in Lahore in safety. They would accompany them and would lay down their lives before a hair of their heads was touched. Gandhiji asked them to write down what they had said so that he could read it to the meeting. They wrote and gave him the following letter:

"The U. P. Peace Mission has twice toured in the West Punjab. They spent one month there on the first occasion and one week on the second. Conditions are much better now and the Government and the people are both trying to establish peace.

1. The West Punjab Government wishes that the non-Muslims living there should continue to do so and those that have left should return.

2. The Government has issued instructions that the property of those non-Muslims who come back should be returned to them.

3. Those non-Muslims who return to the West Punjab should be given full protection and facilities for carrying on their business.

4. If in spite of all their efforts any non-Muslim does not wish to return to the West Punjab, he has full right to sell or exchange his property.

5. The Government is giving exemplary punishments to riot mongers and is taking all precautions against a repetition of the trouble. The Peace Mission has prepared the people and the Government to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring the safety of life, honour and property of the non-Muslims. The members of U. P. Peace Mission assure their non-Muslim brethren that they would accompany those

who wish to return to their homes and help to rehabilitate them. They would protect them with their lives and will not leave them till they feel safe."

A Hindu had also given him a letter saying that he had stayed in Lahore throughout the riot. He was running a restaurant. He had an attendance of nearly one thousand a day. The Government was trying to suppress lawlessness. He requested the non-Muslims, who had left Lahore, to go back.

Gandhiji said that if this was true, he would feel more than satisfied. But the statement of these friends had to be proved in action. He would set about seeing what was possible to do in the matter.

Birla House, New Delhi, 12-12-'47

HARDSHIPS OF THE REFUGEES

A refugee had written to Gandhiji that in accordance with what Gandhiji had said about the return of the non-Muslims to Pakistan the previous evening, he would like to go back as early as possible. In the Union no one cared for the refugees and the refugees were being subjected to great hardships. Gandhiji agreed that the refugees were being subjected to great hardships and that in spite of all the efforts of the Union Government to help them. It must be remembered that the task was so colossal that the best of governments would be hard put to it to cope with it wholly to the satisfaction of everyone. He was, however, not prepared to advise anyone to return to Pakistan today. He would have to verify the statement of the Peace Mission and then to see what suitable arrangements could be made for the return of those who wished to go back.

THE OTHER SIDE

Gandhiji next referred to two angry letters that had come to him, one from Burma and the other from Bombay. They were from Muslims though the writers had chosen to remain anonymous. These friends insisted that the charges of atrocities which had been withdrawn by the Kathiawad Muslims were true. Gandhiji did not see how he could pay any serious attention to anonymous letters. These friends should produce names, facts and figures in support of their charges and only then could Gandhiji ask the local authorities to inquire into them.

A wire from Ajmer said that the disturbances there were not of the magnitude described and that the trouble had not been started by the Hindus. He mentioned this telegram merely to let them know that there were people holding a different view also. He did not know where the truth lay.

Another friend had commented on his remark saying that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had said that the expenditure on the renovation of the Somnath temple would not be met from the State treasury. The friend saw no reason why it should not be so met. Gandhiji believed that if the State spent money for such purposes for one community, it must also do so for the others. That would be wrong.

HOOLIGANISM AT CALCUTTA

Referring to the hooliganism at Calcutta, Gandhiji said that people seemed to have come to believe that they could get anything through violence. It was entirely wrong. In the past he had fasted as a protest against such violence even when it was directed against a foreign Government. Now that they had their own Government, was lawlessness to be tolerated? People complained against Government measures to suppress disorderly behaviour. He would have them understand that freedom could never mean exemption from punishment against offences. If there was anything which they considered unjust, they could agitate against it in a proper manner. Had they tried out peaceful means and found them wanting? Their freedom was a baby of a little over three months. If they obstructed the Government in the reported fashion, it would become impossible for it properly to discharge its functions of supplying food and other amenities to the people. Did all this mean that Indians could be only destructive and that they were unfit for carrying out constructive policies? The fight against the British Government was passive resistance, not violence. Now that they had their own Government, it was wrong to resort to methods which were taboo against the foreign Government.

Birla House, New Delhi, 13-12-'47

MESSAGE OF THE CHARKHA

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to his discussions at the recent meeting of the Charkha Sangh at the Harijan Colony. Why had he laid so much emphasis on the *charkha*? Years ago when he first started talking of the *charkha*, he did not know that it was still a living industry in the Punjab and some parts of Gujarat and Kathiawad. It was first thought of as a means of supplementing the income of the poor *kisan* and the village women. Later on he discovered the tremendous power hidden in the *charkha*. That power was the power of non-violence which could not be defeated by the mightiest military force. It was this realization which had made him call the wheel the symbol of non-violence.

They all knew the history of the spinning wheel, the history of the Dacca Muslin and all its associations. In those days the spinning wheel was the symbol of our slavery. The artisans had to work at the rate fixed by their masters and they could not say no. The same wheel, plied with the full consciousness of its potentialities, had become the symbol of freedom. If all men and women and children of age out of the forty crores of India plied the wheel, they would spin all the yarn required for weaving enough *khadi* for the use of the millions and save crores of rupees. But that was not of great consequence. The greatest thing he valued was the power generated by the co-operative effort of these forty crores of people. Was there any other occupation which could employ such numbers without exploiting anyone? The mills could never do that. They could employ only a few lakhs leaving under partial or full unemployment the millions. In the past they had plied the wheel say, for his sake, but without understanding its full import. That was why the wheel was largely discarded. He wanted them to take to it now with deliberation and understanding. It meant freedom from exploitation. If it meant non-

violence, as it did, it also meant a moral life. If they did that they would never discard it again, they would have no communal or other quarrels and they would become the harbingers of peace for the whole world.

Birla House, New Delhi, 14-12-'47

A Friendly Act

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji said that he had received from a member of the audience, as he was coming, a letter saying that a Muslim friend who, having to leave for Pakistan under pressure, had left with him his hard-earned savings, which he had converted into gold and silver. The writer had asked whether he (the speaker) could see to the gold and silver being sent to the owner. Gandhiji said that if the metals were sent to him with the name and address of the owner, he would gladly ask the authorities to trace the owner and send the property to him.

Nayee Talim

As was promised, he dealt with *Nayee Talim* as it came next in the order in which the subjects were dealt with during his visits to the Harijan Nivas. *Nayee Talim* was only eight years old — not a long experience for an all India body dealing with such a subject as the education of the nation on a new basis. It was popularly and correctly described as education through handicrafts. This was part of the truth. The root of this new education went much deeper. It lay in the application of truth and love in every variety of human activity, whether in individual life or a corporate one. The notion of education through handicraft rose from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities. Love required that true education should be easily accessible to all, and should be of use to every villager in his daily life. Such education was not derived from nor did it depend upon books. It had no relation to sectional religion. If it could be called religious, it was universal religion from which all sectional religions were derived. Therefore, it was learnt from the Book of Life which cost nothing and which could not be taken away from one by any force on earth. The question then rose whether there were such teachers filled with truth and love and whether they could draw pupils who would care for truth and love in this unmoral age of disbelief. This question was to be answered by Dr. Zakir Hussain, the Chairman, and the Secretaries, Shri Aryanayakam and Shrimati Ashadevi. If they believed in truth and love not as a policy but as a life principle, he knew that the possession of these would act as a magnet which would draw to itself the hardest human being. They should possess the qualities that were attributed to the steadfast man as described in the verses sung at the evening prayer. If they did not possess these attributes or if they abandoned the task undertaken by them, the eight years old infant must die. Of the three, the burden mostly fell on the Secretaries. He could not claim that the infant Association had blossomed into an organization that existed irrespective of persons, be they even the organizers.

NOTES

Its Deep Roots

A correspondent writes to the effect that

"Even after independence, the hold of the English language on the city people does not seem to have relaxed to any appreciable extent. In proof of his statement he cites the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition held in Bombay, at which the opener's speech was in English, the signboards were painted in English and the correspondence for the most part was conducted in English. The ration cards are in English, much to the annoyance of the general public, who cannot read English. Our leaders feel that their important pronouncements must be made in English without the slightest regard for the poor public."

This is a just complaint, demanding peremptory redress. The unfortunate inertia has to be thrown out before a visible change for the better takes place in this important matter.

New Delhi, 10-12-'47 M. K. G.

A Right Step at last

At least one Provincial Government — Madras — seems to have awakened at last to the importance of encouraging food crops and increasing the acreage under them as a practical measure of meeting the food shortage in the country. The Government promises facilities in the way of supply of seeds and manures.

In order to prevent any increase in the acreage under commercial crops the Government will not supply manures and fertilizers to such crops.

Again, if any ryots divert their lands under paddy to crops like tobacco, cotton, groundnut, sugarcane etc., they will be disqualified for any assistance or facilities from the Government.

Though these are but halting steps, we welcome them as being in the right direction. May we hope this is just the glimmer of the approaching dawn to an agricultural country based on self-sufficiency?

J. C. K.

NOTICE

Files of Volume X of the three Harijan weeklies — the *Harijan* (English), the *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati) and the *Harijansevak* (Hindustani) of the year beginning with 10-2-'46, and ending with 26-1-'47, bound in cardboard cover and *khadi* back are available at this office.

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MANAGER

CONTENTS

		PAGE
WHO SHOULD BE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS?	... M. K. GANDHI	473
'INTELLECTUAL' CONTENT OF THE 'TAKLI'	DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR	474
DEMOCRATIZE OUR RAILWAYS	... V. G. D.	475
THE DOCTRINE OF MERGER	... M. K. GANDHI	476
SPINNING STILL!	... M. K. GANDHI	476
QUESTION BOX	... M. K. GANDHI	476
GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES		477
NOTES:		
NEVER DANGEROUS	... M. K. G.	473
ITS DEEP ROOTS	... M. K. G.	480
A RIGHT STEP AT LAST	... J. C. K.	480

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